

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MONROV 03472 01 OF 02 181652Z
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OIC-02 AGRE-00 AID-05
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NEA-10 TRSE-00 /098 W
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R 181530Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4788
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 3472

REF: (A) STATE 102699, (B) STATE 103403, (C) STATE 103404,
(D) MONROVIA 0699

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE DISCUSSED CONTINUING U.S. CONCERNS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) WITH GOL AND LIBERIAN LABOR DELEGATES TO THE UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE (ILC) TO BE HELD THIS JUNE IN GENEVA. ON MAY 12 THE ACTING DCM AND LABOR REPORTING OFFICER MET WITH MINISTER OF LABOR J. JENKINS PEAL AND GOL DELEGATE TO THE ILC ETHELBERT COOPER. THE LABOR REPORTING OFFICER ON MAY 16 DISCUSSED ILO ISSUES WITH ESMAEL SHERIF, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED WORKERS CONGRESS AND WORKERS DELEGATE TO THE ILC. A FURTHER MEETING IS PLANNED WITH EMPLOYERS DELEGATE REGIS HUSTON OF LAMCO WHEN HE NEXT VISITS MONROVIA FROM THE LAMCO MINING OPERATIONS IN YEKEPA. OUR PLANNED DEMARCHE ON ILO MATTERS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS POSTPONED DUE TO THE LAST MINUTE SCHEDULING OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S MAY 13-14 VISIT TO LIBERIA. SEPTTEL WILL REPORT RESULTS OF DEMARCHE WITH HOUSTON AND WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. MEETING WITH PEAL AND COOPER
THE ACTING DCM EXPRESSED IN UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS THE CONVICTION OF
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PAGE 02 MONROV 03472 01 OF 02 181652Z

THE U.S. THAT UNLESS TRENDS TOWARD POLITICIZATION OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES WERE REVERSED, THESE AGENCIES COULD NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED EFFECTIVE BY THE U.S. REGARDING THE ILO, THE A/DCM SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES PLACED SPECIAL IMPORTANCE ON THE RESULTS OF THE JUNE CONFERENCE. HE STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES, IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO REMAIN IN THE ILO, WOULD FOLLOW ESPECIALLY CLOSELY THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE ILC ON THE 1974

RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAEL, THE EFFORT TO AMEND ARTICLE 17, THE EQUAL TREATMENT IN THE APPLICATION OF ILO CONVENTIONS, AND THE PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE BASIC VOTING STRUCTURE OF THE ILO. THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT PREPARED TO REMAIN IN THE ILO IF A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS DID NOT JOIN EFFORTS TO RETURN THE ILO TO ITS FOUNDING PRINCIPLES.

3. IN RESPONSE TO THE A/DCM'S DEMARCHE, PEAL AND COOPER EXPRESSED THEIR CONTINUING DESIRE THAT THE UNITED STATES REMAIN IN THE ILO. SYMPATHY WAS EXPRESSED FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ILO, BUT NEITHER PEAL NOR COOPER APPEARED WILLING TO CONSISTENTLY TRANSLATE SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE INTO VOTES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. ALTHOUGH PEAL SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO SEEK ADVICE FROM HIS "PRINCIPAL" (I.E., PRESIDENT TOLBERT) ON THE QUESTION OF "CLOSING THE BOOK" ON THE 1974 RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAEL, BOTH PEAL AND COOPER ARGUED THAT THE INVESTIGATION OF WORKERS CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES SHOULD BE CONTINUED. THEY AGREED THAT THE 1974 RESOLUTION VIOLATED "DUE PROCESS", BUT NOW FEEL THAT THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINEAN WORKERS IS OF SUFFICIENT IMPORT TO THE ILO TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION IRRESPECTIVE OF THE BIASED NATURE OF THE RESOLUTION. COOPER QUESTIONED "WHETHER PROCEDURAL FACTORS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO OVERRIDE REAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAT CRY FOR ATTENTION." HE THOUGHT NOT, AND WENT ON TO QUESTION WHETHER THE GOVERNING BODY HAD THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND AN INVESTIGATION MANDATED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

4. PEAL AND COOPER EXPRESSED SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MECHANISM SUCH AS PROPOSED IN OUR AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17 TO FOCUS CONFERENCE WORK ON MATTERS OF DIRECT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MONROV 03472 01 OF 02 181652Z

LABOR CONCERN. COOPER COMMENTED, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE AMENDMENT IS "FAIR", THE "DOCUMENT AS WRITTEN IS NOT CORRECT." HE BELIEVES THAT REVISION OF THE "INTRICATE STRUCTURE" SET UP BY THE AMENDMENT WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE THE GOL COULD SUPPORT OUR PROPOSAL TO AMEND ARTICLE 17. ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE RESOLUTION SHOULD BE SENT TO THE STANDING ORDER COMMITTEE OR THE COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURE, COOPER NOTED THAT THE AFRICAN DELEGATES WERE SPLIT ON THIS QUESTION, AND HE INDIRECTLY IMPLIED THAT LIBERIA FAVORED SUBMISSION OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE STANDING ORDER COMMITTEE, BUT WOULD NOT BREAK FROM THE CONSENSUS IF A MAJORITY OF AFRICAN NATIONS FAVORED THE COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURE.

5. ON THE QUESTION OF EQUAL TREATMENT IN THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS, PEAL INDICATED THAT LIBERIA WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FIRMLY THE UNITED STATES IN THIS AREA. PEAL NOTED THAT LIBERIA ITSELF HAD IN THE PAST SUFFERED FROM THE UNEQUAL APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND FELT STRONGLY ON THIS ISSUE.

6. COOPER SAID THAT THE GOVERNING BODY'S ACTION TO DEFER FURTHER

SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY ON STRUCTURE WAS A FAIT ACCOMPLI
AND HE DID THEREFORE NOT WXPECT SIGNIFICANT DEBATE ON THIS
QUESTION AT THE UPCOMING SESSION OF THE ILC.

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PAGE 01 MONROV 03472 02 OF 02 181651Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONROVIA 3472

7. MEETING WITH SHEFIF

SHEFIF STATED THAT HE STRONGLY SUPPORTS U.S. POSITIONS AT THE ILC
AND THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS A DEPOLITIZATION OF THE
ILO. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE ILO IS AN INVALUABLE TOOL OF THE
WORKING MAN AND FEARS THAT U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ILO WOULD
LEAD TO THE DEMISE OF THE ORGANIZATION. HE SPOKE WITH DERISION
OF RADICAL AFRICAN AND ARAB ATTEMPTS TO FORM A SEPARATE AFRICAN
LABOR ORGANIZATION. (COMMENT: NEVERTHELESS, SHERIF'S TRADITIONAL
SUPPORT FOR U.S. POSITIONS ON SPECIFIC ILO QUESTIONS APPEARED
WEAKER THAN AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH THE LABOR REPORTING OFFICER.
RATHER THAN PRIDING HIMSELF IN THE LIBERIAN LABOR MOVEMENTS
INDEPENDENCE, SHERIF MADE DISCREET INQUIRIES AS TO GOL POSITIONS
ON ISSUES. HE IMPLIED THAT A DEAL HAD BEEN MADE WITH THE LABOR
MINISTRY THAT THE LABOR MINISTER WOULD PERMIT THE UNIONIZATION OF
BANKING WORKERS, SUPPORT THE UNITED WORKERS CONGRESS (UWC) IN
THEIR CURRENT LABOR DISPUTE WITH CHASE MANHATTAN BANK, AND
INTRODUCE LEGISLATION FAVORABLE TO LABOR INTERESTS, IF LIBERIAN
LABOR WOULD BE MORE COOPERATIVE AT THE ILO. END COMMENT.)
IN THIS REGARD, SHERIF EXPRESSED HIS CONTINUED PERSONAL SUPPORT
FOR "CLOSING THE BOOK" ON THE 1974 RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAEL
AND AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 17 BUT HE WITHHELD COMMITTING HIMSELF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MONROV 03472 02 OF 02 181651Z

TO ANY PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION. HE PROMISED TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES WITH MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND WORK TO ALTER GOL POSITIONS. SHERIF REVERSED HIS PREVIOUS VOW TO CALL ATTENTION TO GOL RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND SIAD THAT HE WOULD NOT RAISE SUCH SENSITIVE ISSUES AS THE ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS. SHERIF DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT OTHER PARTIES WOULD CALL ATTENTION TO GOL'S RESTRICTIONS ON LABOR.

8. SHERIF STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE CANDIDACY OF MORRIS FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND FELT THAT MORRIS' ELECTION WAS ASSURED. THERE WAS NO QUESTION IN HIS MIND THAT THE GOL'S DELEGATION COULD BE PERSUADED TO SUPPORT MORRIS. (COMMENT: SHERIF SHOULD STILL BE CONSIDERED AS HIGHLY APPROACHABLE BY AMERICAN LABOR REPRESENTATIVES AT THE ILC AND MAY PROVE USEFUL IN PRESENTING TO OTHER AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS THOSE POSITIONS HE HOLDS IN COMMON WITH THE U.S. END COMMENT.)

AMOS GRAY OF THE LIBERIAN CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL SERVE AS SHERIF'S ADVISOR. JOHN NATT, RECENTLY SELECTED DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UWC, WILL ALSO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AS A MEMBER OF THE LABOR DELEGATION. (COMMENT: NATT IS INEXPERIENCED IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS AND SHOULD NOT PROVE TO BE VERY INFLUENTIAL AMONG OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LIBERIAN DELEGATION. SINCE BOTH CIO'S AND GRAY'S INFLUENCE IN LIBERIAN LABOR CONTINUES TO DECLINE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT GRAY, AN OLD HAND AT THE ILO, WILL CARRY MUCH WEIGHT IN FORMULATING LIBERIAN POSITIONS. GRAY WILL MOST LIKELY BE LOOKING FOR AN ILO JOB FOR HIMSELF SO THAT HE CAN GRACEFULLY RETIRE FROM THE LIBERIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. END COMMENT.)

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